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AUTHOR Rich, Janet C.
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ABSTRACT

An English/reading steering committee was formed in the 1992-93 academic year at Miami-Dade Community College, in Florida, to recommend college-wide procedures and guidelines for including a writing sample on placement tests for entering students. The committee pilot tested a writing sample in two college-preparatory and one college-level English classes in winter 1992 to determine any improvement in student placement; the mechanics (i.e., time, format, etc.) of adding a sample; and the possibility of including reading subtest scores from placement tests in placement decisions. For the 4,250 students who completed writing samples, files were created of their sample and entry-level test scores and final grades received in the courses. Results of the pilot study included the following: (1) approximately 85% of the students with writing samples were judged to have been properly place using test scores alone; (2) of 19 students who remained in one college-preparatory English course after writing sample scores indicated they needed English-as-a-Second-Language instruction first, 17 received satisfactory or passing grades in the course; (3) difficulties were discovered in including a writing sample and continuing to provide one-stop placement testing; and (4) the contribution of reading subtest scores was found to be significant to placement in English courses, but varied by course and test type. Information on Florida placement criteria and a list of writing topics are appended. (BCY)

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Research Report No. 93-13R

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Institutional Research

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Miami-Dade Community College

CAN A WRITING SAMPLE IMPROVE PLACEMENT IN ENGLISH COURSES?

Research Report No. 93-13R

September 1993

Janet C. Rich
Director of CLAST Administration
and Program Evaluation

Miami-Dade Community College

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

Cathy Morris, Dean

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Can a Writing Sample Improve Placement in English Courses?

Introduction and Summary

An English/Reading Steering Committee met during the 1991-92 academic year to review many of the issues relating to the English and Reading curriculum. The committee was composed of the Chairs of the English and Reading Departments of all the campuses, the District Dean of Academic Affairs and a representative of Institutional Research. Of particular interest to the Chairs and the faculty was the feeling that a multiple-choice format on entry level placement tests did not adequately determine the proper placement of students into college-preparatory English courses. The specific charge to the steering committee was to work with a representative of Institutional Research to recommend College-wide procedures and guidelines for including a writing sample for entering students taking the MAPS, CPT, ACT, or SAT. The writing sample would also be used as a diagnostic tool for assessing learning disabilities and second language interference. Because of the size of the task, the Committee decided to pilot test a writing sample before making any recommendations.

The pilot test was to address three questions. First, can the addition of a writing sample component to entry-level testing improve the placement of students in college-preparatory English courses? Second, how can the addition of a writing sample to entry-level testing be accomplished with regard to time, space, examiners, scoring, etc.? And third, if a writing sample does not improve placement, can placement in English courses be improved by including a student's reading subtest score in placement decisions?

Results of the pilot test indicated that a writing sample would not improve the placement of students. Approximately 85% of students with writing samples were judged to be properly placed using test scores alone. And, many students judged as needing lower courses or ESL remained in the original courses and succeeded. Further, logistics could not be easily resolved to obtain a writing sample and still provide one-stop testing. Finally, the contribution of the reading score to placement in English courses was significant, but varied by course and test type (CPT vs. MAPS).

Background

The State of Florida requires every student who wishes to enroll in an English course at the postsecondary level in State institutions to be tested for communication skills. Students who score below the State-mandated cut scores must successfully complete college-preparatory courses before they are allowed to enroll in college-level English courses.

Miami-Dade Community College has chosen to administer the Florida Multiple Assessment Program (FL-MAPS) and the Computerized Placement Test (CPT) to assess the basic skill levels of our entering students with most (at least 80%) taking the CPT. For the Fall 1992 Term, 42% of those tested (n = 5,291 CPT) were below the cut score for writing. These results were typical of past years. In fact, there has been little variation in the results over the past five years (R.R. No. 93-02R).

In addition to determining if a student needs to be placed in college preparatory courses, the results of the basic skills testing are used to determine the level of college preparatory course work a student needs. There are two levels of college preparatory course work in English, ENC0002 and ENC0020. At the beginning of each term, instructors try to determine if students are properly placed in their classes. Further testing is often done and students are moved to various other courses based on this additional testing. Appendix A contains the Placement Document which describes these placement procedures.

The placement instruments used at Miami-Dade consist entirely of multiple-choice items. Concern was expressed that a multiple-choice format is not the proper way to determine writing proficiency and that a writing sample is necessary to adequately determine a student's proficiency. The English/Reading steering committee decided to address this issue.

Since the Committee began its meetings in the Fall of 1991, it decided that an "essay study" could be done of students entering during the following Winter Term. It was understood that the student who enters in a Winter Term is not typical of the student who enters in the Fall. However, the committee felt that a delay until the following Fall was too long a time period to wait. The Winter essay study would be considered a pilot study which could be improved and repeated depending upon on the initial results of this study.

The specific design of the study was determined after a review of the literature. This review showed that the usual time limits for placement essays were 45 minutes to one hour and that the length of the essays varied. Typically, the essays were written during orientations which all entering students were required to attend and were scored by faculty. A College Board newsletter reported the use of an essay to determine placement of transfer students at San Diego State University (College Board, 1991). The essay was written by groups of students and then sent to the College Board for grading. The usual turn around time was one week. The literature contained the results of placement essays for four-year institutions. There were no studies found from community colleges.

Design

It was clear that the studies noted in the literature review did not fit the situation here at Miami-Dade. Our goal was to sample student writing in various levels of college preparatory work that would sometimes be well below the ability to write a full essay. Thus the steering committee decided that the type of writing sample would depend on the particular course. During the first week of class of the Winter 1992 Term, all students in ENC0002, ENC0020, and ENC1100 were required to produce a writing sample in class. The combination of course and writing sample is outlined below, and expectations increase by level. The students were to provide their own materials: paper, pencils, etc. See Appendix B for a copy of the instructions given to faculty.

Course	Writing Sample
ENC0002	10 to 12 related sentences on a topic
ENC0020	Unified paragraph with 10-12 sentences
ENC1100	3-4 paragraph composition on a given topic

The set of topics varied from campus to campus. Among the topics which were used for each course are:

ENC0002

1. One of the qualities I particularly like about myself.....
2. Describe a room.
3. Describe your typical day.

ENC0020

1. A special person in my life.
2. An experience I'll never forget.
3. My most valued possession.

ENC1100

1. One of my goals and how I will accomplish it.
2. Explain the special charm of a place you know well.

Other topics can be found in Appendix C.

The faculty were instructed to plan the timing of the writing sample so that the entire process could be completed in 50 minutes. The 50 minutes included time for students to be seated, get organized, be presented with instructions and the topics, and complete the writing assignment.

Each instructor was to grade the writing samples produced by his/her own class(es). The scoring of the writing samples was as follows:

Score	Meaning
S	The sample indicates student should be place higher.
P	The sample indicates student is properly placed.
UESL	The sample indicates student should be in ESL classes.

Score	Meaning
U0002	The sample indicates student should be placed at this lower level.
U0020	The sample indicates student should be placed at this lower level.
NS	No writing sample for this student.

The writing sample scores were recorded on a roll sheet and forwarded by the departments to Institutional Research. At the same time the writing samples were being collected, a computer file was created. This file contained the names, student numbers, entry-level test scores, and other data for all students enrolled in ENC0002, ENC0020, and ENC1100 for the Winter 1992 Term. At the end of the term, the file was updated to include the final grades of these students. The final file contained only those students who had received a final grade including "W's" and "I's." The file was designed so that the writing sample score could be added to the record for each student.

This project collected information from approximately 4,250 students who were enrolled in nearly 200 sections. Writing samples were obtained from all students and not just from those students enrolling in their first English class. Since the writing sample was designed to give an independent judgment of the adequacy of placement, the subset of students enrolled in their first English course was selected for analysis. These students, however, were not necessarily first-time-in-college. The effect of students attending during the Fall Term or even some prior term could not be measured. A student could have benefited from the work required in any course taken prior to enrolling in English.

Results

How many students were misplaced?

For each of the courses, it can be seen that the percent of students who were judged as accurately placed was over 80%. Specifically the percent of first-time students who were judged properly placed was 82.3% for ENC0002, 87.8% for ENC0020, and 83.3% for ENC1100.

Table 1 shows the writing sample results by specific course.

Table 1

Results of Writing Sample Pilot Study - Placement Judgments

	Number of Students	Percent in Category	
ENC0002			
Total Students	249	100.0	
No Writing Sample	74	29.7	
Total with Writing Sample	175	70.3	
Score: Place Higher	12	6.9	(of 175)
Placed O.K.	144	82.3	
Needs ESL	19	10.8	
Subtotal Misplaced	31	17.7	
ENC 0020			
Total Students	1,046	100.0	
No Writing Sample	241	23.0	
Total with Writing Sample	805	77.0	
Score: Place Higher	70	8.7	(of 805)
Placed O.K.	707	87.8	
Place Lower	22	2.7	
Needs ESL	6	0.8	
Subtotal Misplaced	98	12.2	
ENC1100			
Total	503	100.0	
No Writing Sample	84	16.7	
Total with Writing Sample	419	83.3	
Score: Place Higher	41	9.8	(of 419)
Placed O.K.	346	82.6	
Place Lower	28	6.7	
Needs ESL	4	0.9	
Subtotal Misplaced	73	17.4	

ENC0002 had the highest percent of students whose writing sample indicated they needed ESL--about 11%. For the other two courses, this percent was below 1%. The most probable reason for this large difference is that for ENC0002 there is no "lower course" to refer a student who is not considered prepared for this level. A referral to ESL would essentially be the only option.

The percent of students who received a score indicating they should be placed higher was about 10% for ENC0020 and ENC1100. The results were quite different for ENC0002 where only 6.9% were scored as needing higher placement. The percent of students who received a score indicating that they should be placed lower was 3% for ENC0020 and 7% for ENC1100.

Question 1. Can a writing sample improve placement?

Many students who received a score indicating that they should be placed in a different level (higher or lower) remained in the course in which the writing sample was obtained. We thus have two indicators of appropriate course placement: (1) the initial placement test scores; and (2) the faculty member's judgment of the writing sample. An examination of final course grades can help determine if the writing sample judgment was a better predictor of success than the original course placement.

The next part of this report will look at the final course grade to determine if the writing sample score would improve placement. The tables which follow show final course grade by writing sample score by course. The data in these tables are not presented by campus. Since the intent of this study was to determine if a writing sample would be helpful for placement, any placement criteria would apply to all entering students and would not be campus specific. Also, since there was a different type of writing sample for each of the three courses, a separate analysis had to be done for each course.

Tables 2 through 4 show the relationship between the writing sample scores and the grades in each course. The only course grades which are considered are S, P, U, and A, B, C, D, F, and W. There are several types of W grades, but because of low frequencies, it is more informative to group these grades into one category. Grades of "S" (Satisfactory) and "P" (Progress) are summarized together as "passing" grades, as are grades of "C" or better.

Table 2

ENC0002

Writing Sample by Course Grade for
First-Time Enrollees

Course Grade	Judgment From Writing Sample Score						Total	
	Place Higher		Placed O.K.		Move to ESL			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Satisfactory	8	67	83	57	11	58	102	58
Progress	0	0	37	27	6	31	43	25
(Subset "Passing")	(8	67)	(120	84)	(17	89)	(145	83)
Unsatisfactory	0	0	12	8	0	0	12	7
Withdrawal	4	33	12	8	2	11	18	10
Total	12	100	144	100	19	100	175	100

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Table 3

ENC0020

Writing Sample by Course Grade for
First-Time Enrollees

Course Grade	Judgment From Writing Sample Score									
	Place Higher		Placed O.K.		Move to ESL		Move to ENC0002		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Satisfactory	48	69	423	60	2	33	8	36	481	60
Progress	10	14	127	18	3	50	9	41	149	18
(Subset "Passing")	(58	83)	(550	78)	(5	83)	(17	77)	(630	78)
Unsatisfactory	2	3	58	8	1	17	0	0	61	8
Withdrawal	10	14	99	14	0	0	5	23	114	14
Total	70	100	707	100	6	100	22	100	805	100

Table 4

ENC1100

Writing Sample by Course Grade for
First-Time Enrollees

	Judgment From Writing Sample Score									
	Place Higher		Placed O.K.		Move to ESL		Move to ENC0020		Total	
Course Grade	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
A	10	24	61	18	1	25	0	-	72	17
B	14	34	93	27	0	-	6	21	113	27
C	12	30	75	22	1	25	7	25	95	23
(Subset "Passing)	(36	88)	(229	67)	(2	50)	(13	46)	(280	67)
D	1	2	33	10	1	25	2	8	37	9
F	0	-	31	8	0	-	6	21	37	9
W	4	10	53	15	1	25	7	25	65	15
Total	41	100	346	100	4	100	28	100	419	100

It can be seen from the tables that the percent of students passing each course level decreased as the levels increased. Thus 83% passed ENC0002, compared to 78% in ENC0020, and 67% in ENC1100. More importantly, many of those students who received an unfavorable score on the writing sample remained in the original course and succeeded. For ENC0002, 11 of the 19 students who were judged as needing ESL received an "S" in ENC0002, and six more received a "P." For ENC0020, 17 of the 22 students judged as needing placement in a lower course remained in ENC0020 and received an "S" or "P". That is, over 75% of those judged as needing to go to ENC0002 passed ENC0020. Results for ENC1100 were less obvious, but 15 of 32 students judged as needing ESL or college preparatory passed this college-level course.

What about students who did not remain in the original courses? As mentioned earlier, it was difficult to trace first-time students who moved to other classes. If the student dropped the second course before purge dates, the student was lost from the study. For those students who were found, Table 5 summarizes the grades these students received in the new course.

Of the students in ENC0020 who transferred to ENC0002, 17 students (42%) received a grade of "S." From the information in Table 2, the percent of students in ENC0002 who received an "S" grade is 58%. Thus a smaller percent of those transferred received an "S" than the total group of students placed there initially. The surprising finding from ENC0002 were the students who transferred not to ENC0020 but to a higher course. Several students transferred to ENC1100 and half of them passed the course. Few ENC1100 first-time students who were judged as needing higher placement transferred to another class. Only four transfer grades were found.

Returning to the first question this study was to address: Can the addition of an essay component to entry-level testing improve the placement of students in the college preparatory English courses?

Table 5

Grades for Students Who Changed Courses by Writing Sample Score

Original Course/Score	Courses Switched to and Grade					
ENC0002/Move Higher (N=37)	ENC0020 (N=29)			ENC1100 (N=8)		
	Grade	No.	%	Grade	No.	%
	S	9	31	A	-	-
	P	11	38	B	1	12
	(Subset "Passing"	20	69)	C	3	38
	U	1	3	(Subset "Passing"	4	50)
				D	1	12
	W,O*	8	28	F	-	-
				W,O	3	38
ENC0020/Move Lower (N=40)	ENC0002 (N=40)					
	Grade	No.	%			
	S	17	42			
	P	10	25			
	(Subtest "Passing"	27	67)			
	U	1	3			
	W,O	12	30			
Move Higher (N=46)				ENC1100 (N=46)		
				Grade	No.	%
				A	6	13
				B	16	35
				C	10	22
				(Subset "Passing"	32	70)
				D	3	7
				F	3	7
				W,O	8	17

ENC1100/Move Higher - Four cases were found.

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The data found in this study supports the answer "No." Approximately 85% of all the writing samples scores indicated that students were properly placed. Very few students (29 of 1,399 or 2.1%) in the group received a judgment that they should be placed in ESL, and many of these students stayed in the original course and succeeded. Only 7% of the students received scores indicating a lower English course was needed. Again many of these students stayed in the courses and succeeded.

There are a number of things to keep in mind with regard to the results and the design of this study. The students were already enrolled in their classes, thus the instructors were scoring samples for a homogenous group of students. An expected range of writing ability was already known to the instructors. The different types of writing samples also could have preset specific expectations. Also, each instructor was to assign a writing sample score using a scale which was defined solely for this study. This scale was not something which instructors had used before. There was no measure of the consistency of the scoring. Some instructors had every writing sample in each section scored as "placed O.K.". One instructor had scored each sample as indicating the students should be placed higher. Finally a score of "placed O.K." did not represent a unique "amount of writing ability". The range of writing ability represented by each score was not necessarily the same for each instructor.

At the beginning of this report it was stated that this project was initiated because of the feeling that students were not being properly placed by a multiple-choice placement test. However, the data show that approximately 85% of all students taking their first English course were considered properly placed. Moreover, since writing samples were collected and scored from all students enrolled in these classes, the results for students who were <u>not</u> in their first English course could also be analyzed. These results are reported in Table 6. The percent of students who were considered misplaced is higher for these "continuing" students than for the first-time students. In particular the percent of students who should be placed at lower levels is higher for the "continuing" students than for first-time students. This result may be influencing the perception that students are not properly placed.

Table 6

Placement Judgments for Students Promoted to Course Level

	Number of Students	Percent in Category
ENC0002		
Total Students	108	100.0
No Writing Sample	7	6.5
Total with Writing Sample	101	93.3
Score: Place Higher	38	37.6(of 101)
Placed O.K.	52	51.5
Needs ESL	11	10.9
Subtotal Misplaced	49	48.5
ENC0020		
Total Students	1,013	100.0
No Writing Sample	123	12.1
Total with Writing Sample	890	87.9
Score: Place Higher	71	8.0(of 890)
Placed O.K.	705	79.2
Place Lower	82	9.2
Needs ESL	32	3.6
Subtotal Misplaced	185	20.8
ENC1100		
Total	1,326	100.0
No Writing Sample	177	13.3
Total with Writing Sample	1,149	86.7
Score: Place Higher	118	10.3(of 1,149)
Placed O.K.	879	76.5
Place Lower	130	11.3
Needs ESL	22	1.9
Subtotal Misplaced	270	23.5

Question 2. How should a writing sample component be collected if it is found to be effective?

The second question that this study was to address dealt with the logistics of collecting writing samples. The first problem discussed was when and where the writing sample should be obtained. The suggested time and location were at the time the student

is tested on the CPT or the MAPS. However if the student is tested on the CPT, another room would be needed which had proper desks, tables, etc. for writing. An alternative suggestion was to have the writing sample scheduled for groups instead of on an individual basis.

With either of these suggestions, it was felt that there was no way the sample could be graded immediately. Some turn-around time would be needed. The College Board time of one week was considered too long a time to wait. This need for time to score the writing sample would mean an end to the one-stop-admission and registration process which now exists at the College. A larger problem was determining who should score thousands of essays. This issue was not resolved.

Question 3. Can reading placement scores provide additional information to aid in placement in English courses?

The remaining question to be considered in this study is to determine if there exists a combination of writing and reading entry-level scores which would improve the placement of students in English courses. A series of analyses was done to investigate this question. The first analysis was a regression analysis to determine if the reading entry-level score contributed in a significant way to predicting success in English courses. These analyses were done twice for each course; once for MAPS scores and once for CPT scores. SAS programming was written which would test the effect of adding the reading placement score to the regression equation which already contained the writing placement score. The results are given in Table 7.

Table 7

Effect of Adding Reading Score to Placement in English Courses

Course Test	F	df Numerator	df Denominator	p ≤
All Courses				
CPT	18.65	1	1239	.0001*
MAPS	14.33	1	1446	.0002*
ENC0002				
CPT	1.63	1	180	.2030
MAPS	6.02	1	149	.0153*
ENC0020				
CPT	16.23	1	647	.0001*
MAPS	.99	1	726	.3200
ENC1100				
CPT	3.54	1	406	.0607*
MAPS	12.41	1	565	.0005*

*Significant contribution of Reading score.

An interesting set of results was obtained. When no distinction by course was made, each entry-level reading test contributed in a significant way to the grades received in the courses. When the courses were considered individually, three different results were obtained. For ENC0002, the reading subtest score from the CPT was not helpful but the score from MAPS was. The reverse is true for ENC0020. The CPT reading score was significant, but the MAPS score did not help in determining final grades. For ENC1100, both entry-level reading scores were significant.

In searching for a combination of reading and writing scores which could be used in placing students, one situation arose which made the combinations ineffective. In some cases where reading scores made significant contributions, the writing scores tended to cluster around the cut scores. This clustering was not consistently present. Thus before reading scores are placed in combination with writing scores, the cut scores for

writing need to be reevaluated. With the State's choice of a single placement test, the State-mandated cut scores are going to be revised. When these changes are put in place, we can review all of our cut scores. Any action before this time would be premature.

June 1, 1993

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Faculty and Staff

FROM: Academic Affairs Committee
Research and Testing Committee

SUBJECT: PLACEMENT CRITERIA FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 1993-94

Since 1985, the State of Florida has required entry-level testing for students seeking Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees. Students who are unfamiliar with English may be required to take another test to measure their English proficiency before entry-level testing is permitted. The State has also required agencies offering Post-Secondary Adult Vocational (PSAV) Programs to test vocational students entering their programs. This year's Placement Criteria Document has been expanded to reflect all these testing options. It is divided into three parts: (A) Placement Criteria for Degree-Seeking Students, (B) Placement Criteria based on English Proficiency Testing, and (C) Procedures for Testing and Placement Criteria for Post Secondary Adult Vocational Programs.

A. PLACEMENT CRITERIA FOR DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENTS

The State of Florida requires each public college and university to administer one of the following test batteries to degree-seeking students prior to registration: Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), American College Testing (ACT), Assessment of Skills for Successful Entry and Transfer (ASSET), Florida Multiple Assessment Programs and Services (FL-MAPS), or Computerized Placement Tests (CPT). Miami-Dade Community College has selected the CPT and the FL-MAPS. Approximately 90% of our incoming students take the CPT. All minimum scores below which students are designated for college preparatory work have been determined at the State level and are the same for each college or university. These scores were first established for January, 1985 and were revised in August, 1991.

Miami-Dade will require students who meet any of the following definitions to write the Florida MAPS or the CPT prior to registration unless exempted. A registration hold is in place to prevent student registration until scores are presented.

REQUIRED:

1. All first-time-in-college students who designate themselves as degree-seeking. Such students may not register for any credit course at Miami-Dade until they have scores on file.

2. All students who register for any English or mathematics course.

3. All students who register beyond 15 cumulative credits.

4. High school students whose scores place them in college preparatory work are not permitted to dual enroll. However, students who score above the college preparatory level in mathematics may, if they meet other criteria specified by the College, enroll in advanced mathematics courses.

5. All students who took a placement examination more than three years ago and who have not used those scores for placement decisions.

EXEMPTED FROM FL-MAPS/CPT TESTING:

1. Students who have earned an associate degree or higher from an accredited institution.

2. Students who present scores obtained over three years ago and who have used them in course placement decisions.

3. Students who have earned a grade of "C" or better in both a college-level English course and a college-level algebra course or higher.

4. Students who have previously attended another college or university and are enrolling for courses to transfer to their primary institution (and who are not seeking a degree at M-DCC) are exempt from basic skills testing unless they enroll in an English or mathematics course.

5. All non-degree-seeking students enrolled in Specialized Training Opportunity (STO) programs who have previously completed and/or are currently enrolled and have not exceeded 24 credits.

6. Students who present SAT or ACT scores which meet State requirements are exempt from further testing. If multiple test results are on record, the highest subtest scores are used. Any score below that needed for exemption will result in testing on the FL-MAPS or CPT.

Area	Enhanced ACT		SAT	
Reading	Reading	≥16	Verbal	≥340
English	English	≥16	TSWE	≥ 31
Math	Math	≥16	Math	≥400

7. Students in specified programs for which the College President may waive assessment within the guidelines provided by State Rule.

The following cutoff scores on the four subtests of the Florida MAPS and CPT are in effect. If scores on one or more of the subtests require college preparatory placement, students must enroll in at least one college preparatory course during that term.

1993-94 Florida Multiple Assessment Programs and Services (FL-MAPS) and Computerized Placement Tests (CPT)

FL-MAPS Scale Scores	CPT Scale Scores	Course
	Reading	
1 - 4	43 or less	REA 0001[1]
5 - 12	44 - 71	REA 0002
13 - 14	72 - 77	REA 1105[2]
	Writing	
20	47 or less	ENC 0002
21 - 30	48 - 77	ENC 0020
31 - 36	78 - 88	ENC 1130
37+	89+	ENC 1101
	Elementary Algebra	
201 - 209	50 or less	MAT 0012 or MAT 0024
210+	51+	MAT 1033 or higher[3]
	Arithmetic	
Although not required by the State, Miami-Dade Community College also requires an arithmetic test, using the following scores for placement:		
101 - 110	29 or less	MAT 0003
111 - 115	30 - 47	MAT 0012 or MAT 0003

[1]Students scoring at this level must see an advisor prior to registering.
[2]Required as pre-or co-requisite to ENC 1102.
[3]Students wishing to take a course higher than MAT 1033 should see a mathematics advisor.

Further testing may be conducted in English, reading, and mathematics classes and class placement changed based on the results.

B. PLACEMENT CRITERIA BASED ON ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TESTING

Students who enroll without sufficient proficiency in English are required to take the English Placement Test (EPT) and be placed in the designated English as a Second Language (ESL/ENS) course. The following cutscores are currently being used:

EPT Raw Score[1]	Course Placement[2]
0 - 25	College Prep 1
26 - 39	College Prep 2
40 - 54	College Level 1
55 - 69	College Level 2
70 - 84	College Level 3
85 - 95	College Level 4
96 - 100	Exempt from ENS

CPT or MAPS testing is required following EPT testing and/or completion of ENS/ESL courses.

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[1] Approved by Academic Affairs 2/18/92.

[2] Campus department may adjust initial placement based on a writing sample. Further testing may be done in classrooms.

C. PROCEDURES FOR TESTING AND PLACEMENT CRITERIA FOR POST-SECONDARY ADULT VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The State of Florida requires each education agency offering Post-Secondary Adult Vocational Programs of four hundred fifty (450) clock hours or more to administer one of the following examinations to assess student mastery of basic skills. Only the following tests are acceptable:

a. American College Testing Career Planning Program - Short Form of Assessment Booklet.

b. Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills - Levels H-J (Measuring grade levels 7-12).

c. Wide Range Achievement Test - Level 2.

d. Test of Adult Basic Education - 1986 Edition Forms 5 and 6 Complete Battery, or the Tests of Adult Basic Education Survey Form.

Miami-Dade Community College has selected the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). The College will administer the TABE according to the following rules:

1. If the program does not provide remediation, the Survey Form will be administered.

2. If the program does provide remediation, the Complete Battery, Form 5, will be administered.

3. Retesting is offered only following completion of a prescribed remediation program, with a minimum 30-day period after initial testing. When retesting, the Complete Battery, Form 6, is to be used. If an additional retest is necessary, Form 5, will be administered no sooner than 60 days following the date of the most recent administration.

All students must have Miami-Dade vocational credit student numbers and will be assessed a $10.00 testing fee (per test administration) prior to sitting for the TABE. It will be the responsibility of the requesting agency or program to handle the matter of vocational credit student numbers and to inform students of the fee when requesting a group administration of the TABE.

Minimum basic skills grade levels in mathematics and language are defined in each vocational program description adopted under Rule 6A-6.0571, FAC, and published annually by the Commissioner in the document entitled, "Vocational Education Program Course Standards." Program personnel should refer to this document for specific program cutscores.

Miami-Dade Community College may accept official test scores from certified academic institutions. Parameters for testing will be established between coordinating agencies.

REQUIRED TO BE TESTED

1. All first-time-in-program students who designate themselves as certificate-seeking in a program of four hundred fifty (450) or more clock hours. Such students may not register for any PSAV program at Miami-Dade until they have scores on file.

2. All students who complete more than two courses in a program of 450 clock hours or more must be tested before enrolling in the third course of the program.

3. All students who complete a PSAV program of less than 450 hours which has specific exit criteria as defined by the "Vocational Education Course Standards."

4. All students whose TABE scores are more than three years old and have not been used for placement.

EXEMPTED FROM TESTING

1. Students who have earned an associate degree or higher from an accredited institution are ordinarily exempted from testing except in specific situations such as certain programs sponsored by external funding agencies.

2. Students who present official scores on any of the four state approved exams which demonstrate the skill level required by the specific program. The scores must have been obtained within the past three years.

Research and Testing Committee
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INSTRUCTIONS TO FACULTY:

1. All ENC 0002, ENC 0020 and ENC 1100 classes will be involved in a pilot study to determine the validity of the writing sample in placing students into the appropriate ENC course.

2. During the first week of the semester:

A. Students in ENC 0002 should be asked to write (in class) 10 -12 related sentences. The topics will be assigned by the department.
Format: narrative or descriptive.
Time limit: 50 minutes.

B. Students in ENC 0020 should be asked to write (in class) a paragraph with a minimum of 10 -12 related sentences. The topics will be assigned by the department.
Format: narrative or descriptive.
Time limit: 50 minutes.

C. Students in ENC 1100 should be asked to write (in class) a 3-4 paragraph composition. The topics will be assigned by the department. Format: narrative or descriptive.
Time limit: 50 minutes.

3. The assignments should be graded by the instructor using the following grading scale:

S (Student should be moved to a higher level course)

P (Student should remain in the course)

U 020 (Student should be moved from ENC 1100 to ENC 0020)

U 002 (Student should be moved from ENC 0020 to ENC 0002)

U ESL (Student should be referred to the ESL department for testing)

NS (No Show/Student was not present in class to complete assignment)

COLLEGE PREP. DEPARTMENT
DIVISION OF ARTS & LETTERS

WRITING SAMPLE TOPICS 91-2

ENC 0002

(Choose one of the following topics. Students should be asked to write 10-12 related sentences.)

One of the qualities I particularly like about myself...

Describe a room.

Describe your typical day.

ENC 0020

(Choose one of the following topics. Students should be asked to write a paragraph with a minimum of 10-12 related sentences.)

Positive qualities I possess.

Describe a place you think a friend would enjoy.

Describe for a friend how you did something.

ENC 1100

(Choose one of the following topics. Students should be asked to write a 3-4 paragraph composition.)

One of my goals and how I will accomplish it.

Explain the special charm of a place you know well.

Explain a process/procedure that you find interesting.

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COMPLETE IN FIRST CLASS SESSION

Additional Topics

1. Describe your most memorable holiday.
2. Tell about a time you were disappointed.
3. A special person in my life.
4. An experience I'll never forget.
5. My most valued possession.
6. Tell about a time when you triumphed or failed.
7. Describe a bad habit you or someone you know has.
8. My favorite vacation spot.
9. My first day in college.

References

College Board. (1991). San Diego State University Uses Essay Test. College Entry-Level Assessment Update, Fall, 1991. College Board, NY.

Rich, Janet C. (1993). Miami-Dade Community College Computerized Placement Test Norms, Fall Term 1992 (Research Report No. 93-02R). Miami, FL: Miami-Dade Community College, Office of Institutional Research.

Miami-Dade Community College

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